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Fraser: U.S. Fails in Dealing Effectively With Newer Nations

By NICK KOTZ

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—Rep. Donald Fraser, D-Minn., contends the United States is hindered in dealing effectively with insurgency attacks in the developing nations, because of its failure to foster political development in these countries.

Various State and Defense Department officials are known to be studying a recent Fraser speech in which he said:

"The U.S. government for too long has been content to deal only formally with other nations, pushing and prodding through diplomatic channels, using the leverage which our aid gives us to influence decisions, and occasionally stimulating a coup.

"WE HAVE inadequate communication with the various groups and forces in developing societies and are able to exert little influence upon the shape of new forces.

"This deficiency becomes acute when a nation comes under insurgency attack. We step up our assistance and our military involvement, but we lack competence to deal with the political aspects of insurgency wars."

Fraser, a second-term congressman from Minneapolis and member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is emerging rapidly as the leader of House liberals on issues of foreign policy.

In his speech made last week at a private meeting of policy experts, Fraser urged that the Agency for International Development be given

responsibility for a stepped-up effort to develop political maturity in the poorer nations, who are struggling with the problem of political stability.

FRASER SAID that present U.S. policy makes the erroneous assumption that merely providing military and economic aid to these nations will result in stable, democratic governments.

Political maturity does not develop automatically from military and economic assistance when such aid is not directly related to political movements within a country, believes Fraser.

For example, Fraser said the administration acknowledges that the problem in Viet Nam is primarily political, yet responsibility in Washington is "obscure and diffuse" for coping with problems of internal political development in South Viet Nam.

Fraser stressed "the importance of working with people and ideas and attempting to exert influence from the bottom up instead of from the top down."

"IT IS our failure to become involved with the various elements in a developing society which is the focus of my concern," said Fraser.

Summarizing his view of the needed but missing element in U.S. policy, he said: "We should systematically try to trigger, to stimulate, and to guide the growth of fundamental social structures and behaviors among large numbers of people in other

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countries if we are to insure political development commensurate with the technological and defensive military prowess we are already striving for."

Fraser believes the United States will not, by such action, be accused of meddling in the internal affairs of other countries, so long as we carefully avoid interfering directly in their political decision-making.

RATHER THAN attempting a wholesale transfer of

United States values and institutions, Fraser said, "The United States should become involved with the people of the developing nations and work with them as they shape their own future."

"The developing nations hold self-determination as one of their highest principles," he said. "We seek to advance and protect that right."

Citing examples of U.S. programs which help foster political development and which should be stepped up, Fraser mentioned:

Current aid-financed programs to train rural leaders and labor union leaders, to organize co-operatives, community development projects, citizen leadership projects, the Peace Corps, education projects, and "sister relationships" between U.S. cities and states and their counterparts in other countries.

Fraser said the agency for international development should:

Create a top-level political study and research staff.

Bring political development concepts to bear on the formulation of economic assistance programs.

Develop an operating capability in general political development.

Sponsor a center for democratic development to carry on those activities which the government finds difficult to do directly.

Then, Fraser cited the following possibilities for U.S. action:

1 Provide an institutional framework for absorbing and retaining the knowledge we gain about political development so that "We build on the lessons of the past."

"The lessons of the earlier years in Viet Nam should teach us that at the very least we need civilians in the field who know first hand what is going on..." said Fraser.

2 Stimulate organizations based on economic or community interest.

"Whether the groups are co-operatives, credit unions, campesino organizations, labor unions or based on some other self-help concept, they give experience in democratic power," said Fraser. "In short, these groups can become the source for popularly based political movements."

3 Encourage Democratic leadership by providing training opportunities for all levels of political leadership.

On this point, Fraser said he knows an American, skilled in political education work in Latin America, yet—aside from the CIA—there is no place for him to work because "every other agency disclaims responsibility for political development work."

4 Establish more personal links between individuals and groups in this country and those in the developing countries, with many of these contacts made through a non-governmental and possibly multinational organization.

"We may need non-governmental groups to establish links with different political forces in the same country," said Fraser.

5 Expand existing programs of rural and urban development with emphasis upon literacy, agricultural know-how, public administration, and business management.

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